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External Counterpulsation Treatment of Refractory Angina

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External counterpulsation has been used worldwide as a treatment for angina for twenty years.

Recent changes in technology and a growing body of research, which supports the effectiveness of external counterpulsation, have sparked interest in this country. Mayo Foundation Rochester offers Enhanced External Counterpulsation (EECP) treatments to provide another option for patients with chronic angina who are not able to have bypass surgery or balloon angioplasty.

EECP is FDA-approved and is a non-surgical outpatient treatment that may reduce symptoms of angina. EECP is believed to do this by creating new pathways (coronary collateral circulation) around blocked arteries in the heart, increasing the blood circulation to the heart muscle. EECP has been shown to provide long-term relief of symptoms in patients with heart disease. A treatment course consists of 35 one-hour sessions over a seven-week period.

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EECP treatment uses pressure cuffs wrapped around the upper thigh, lower thigh and calves of each leg. These cuffs are quickly inflated with compressed air during the resting phase of the heartbeat.

When the heart contracts, the cuffs are deflated. This inflation/deflation of the cuffs forces blood to the heart, increases the heart's output and may help the heart develop better circulation. EECP treatments are administered by a registered nurse under the supervision of a staff cardiologist. During the course of EECP therapy, each person's coronary risk factors are evaluated and a variety of support services are available to encourage a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Physician Staff

Gregory W. Barsness, M.D. - Director

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